

SAN ANTONIO'S HISTORIC WESTSIDE

by City of San Antonio, Office of Historic Preservation
photographs by Office of Historic Preservation staff

Visitors to San Antonio are familiar with the Alamo, our historic Spanish missions, and our scenic River Walk. But how many have experienced the history and culture of San Antonio's historic Westside? The buildings and artwork of the City's Westside offer a unique glimpse into an important part of San Antonio's Mexican-American history. Once an integral extension of downtown, the near Westside was inadvertently cut off by the interstate highway system. Despite the barrier, the Westside offers visitors many hidden treasures from San Antonio's past. Take a tour off the beaten path and explore the heart of the City's historic Westside!

Start your journey with the Murals y Mas Tour, an online self-guided neighborhood tour of the art, history, and culture of the city's Westside. Produced by the City's Office of Cultural Affairs, the online tour is available at saculturalartours.com. View the dramatic murals throughout the community that recognize the Mexican-American culture and heritage of San Antonio. Learn about the artists and their visionary messages. Visit San Fernando Cemetery No. 1, the 19th century burial ground that became the exclusive cemetery for Catholics in San Antonio and the resting place of noted veterans of the Texas Revolution. Stroll down Guadalupe Street, once the "Main Street" of the Westside in the early 20th century. See the 1940s Guadalupe Theater, part of a once thriving entertainment district, and stop into the Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center, whose mission is to promote the art and culture of Chicano, Latino, and Native American people. Don't miss the historic photo banners along Guadalupe Street that document the history of the Westside people and community.

The Murals y Mas Tour includes Westside historic churches such as St. Alphonsus, Our Lady of Guadalupe, and the Mexican Christian Church. Also take a look at the childhood home of actress Carol Burnett. Then explore scenic Elmerdorf Park and Lake with its walking trails and sweeping views of the historic Our Lady of the Lake University. And don't forget to sample some of the local cuisine. Westside eateries, bakeries, and even a candy store are all part of the tour.

The Murals y Mas Tour is available to view online or can be printed out to take with you as you explore the City's Westside by car. The tour provides a wealth of information, images, historic photos, driving directions, and maps highlighting the murals, artwork, historic sites, and local establishments

of the near Westside. Enjoy your journey into the heart of the Westside community!

Other historic Westside places to see beyond the Murals y Mas Tour include the Cattleman Square Historic District. Located just past the interstate at W. Houston and Medina Streets, the area was once a thriving commercial district that developed around the railroad in the late 19th century. A number of historic commercial buildings remain. Don't miss the majestic The International & Great Northern Railroad Station at 123 N. Medina. This Mission Revival style train station was constructed in 1907 with an imposing central dome, bell towers, stained glass windows, and a bronze statue atop the lantern. The beautifully restored building now serves as the downtown branch of Generations Federal Credit Union.

Another significant focal point on the Westside skyline is Our Lady of Mount Carmel and St. Therese Church, also known as the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Little Flower. The magnificent basilica and adjacent monastery were constructed in 1931 at the corner of N. Zarzamora and Kentucky. The elaborate corner towers, gilded central dome and lantern, and a variety of stained glass windows are a must see. Italian marble, mosaic tiles, elaborate statuary, wrought iron, and decorative plaster adorn the interior. Much of the interior is designed around the rose motif – the symbol of St. Therese. St. Therese's tomb at the Carmelite Convent in Lisieux, France is replicated in the small side chapel south of the main altar.

Enjoy your journey into San Antonio's Westside history and culture! For additional information, contact the City's Office of Historic Preservation at OHP@sanantonio.gov or 210-215-9274, or visit our website at www.sanantonio.gov/historic.

The Office of Historic Preservation is currently undertaking a Westside Cultural Resource Survey to identify and document additional places of cultural, historical, and architectural significance on San Antonio's Westside. The ongoing project partners the Office of Historic Preservation with other organizations and Westside community members to celebrate the places that matter to San Antonio's historic Westside.



Clockwise from Top Left: *Lideres de la Comunidad* (Leaders in the Community) Mural, the International & Great Northern Railroad Station, the Guadalupe Theater, Our Lady of Mount Carmel and St. Therese Church or the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Little Flower

